

Message Text

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ACTION OES-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-10 EUR-12 ISO-00 ACDA-12 CIAE-00
INR-10 IO-13 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 EB-08 NRC-05
SOE-02 DODE-00 DOE-11 SS-15 SP-02 CEQ-01 PM-05
/122 W

-----089494 181851Z /64

R 171842Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4595
INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA
AMEMBASSY VIENNA

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 1244

USIAEA

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS PARM, MNUC, TECH, AR
SUBJECT US ARGENTINE NUCLEAR ISSUES: CONVERSATION WITH MR
JORGE ANTONIO COLL - SECRETARY GENERAL, CNEA

1. THE SCIENCE COUNSELOR MET FEBRUAR 15 WITH
DR JORGE ANTONIO COLL, SECRETARY GENERAL - NATIONAL
COMMISSION FOR ATOMIC ENERGY (CNEA), TO BECOME ACQUAINTED
AND TO DISCUSS A BROAD RANGE OF NUCLEAR ISSUES. DR COLL
WAS EXTREMELY FRIENDLY AND WE HAVE AGREED TO MEET ON A
REGULAR BASIS TO EXCHANGE VIEWS.

2. IN REGARD TO ENERGY, COLL FEELS THAT THE MAIN THRUST
IN THE EXPANSION OF ARGENTINAS ELECTRICITY PRODUCTION
WILL INEVITABLY BE HYDROELECTRIC. HOWEVER HE FEELS THAT
NUCLEAR ENERGY WILL MOVE FORWARD OVER THE NEXT 20 YEAR,
HOPEFULLY TO A POINT WHERE 25 TO 30 PERCENT OF THE COUNTRY'S
ELECTRIC POWER WILL BE GENERATED FROM NUCLEAR SOURCES BY
THE YEAR 2000. HOWEVER HE ADMITTED THIS SEEMS SOMEWHAT
OPTIMISTIC AT THIS POINT. IN ADDITION TO THE NATURAL
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URANIUM-FUELED POWER REACTOR NOW OPERATING AT ATUCHA
(THE REACTOR HAS RECENTLY BEEN INCREASED TO 347 MWE),
A SECOND REACTOR PLANT IS UNDER CONSTRUCTION WITH
CANADIAN ASSISTANCE AT EMBALSE. THIS WILL BE A NATURAL
URANIUM-FUELED CANDU 600 MWI TYPE REACTOR. ACCORDING
TO COLL THERE ARE ALSO PLANS FOR AN ADDITIONAL 600 MWE
NATURAL URANIUM-FUELED REACTOR, AT ATUCHA, AND POSSIBLY

A FOURTH RACTOR OF THE SAME TYPE AND POWER. HOWEVER, COLL FEELS THAT UNDER THE PRESENT ECONOMIC SITUATION IT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO MOVE AHEAD ON SCHEDULE WITH THE PLANS FOR THE PURCHASE AND OPERATION OF THE NEW REACTORS BY 1985. THE TIMING WILL ALSO DEPEND ON HOW MUCH ARGENTINA CAN CONTRIBUTE FROM ITS OWN RESOURCES. COLL INDICATED THAT ARGENTINA WILL CONTINUE WITH ITS OVERALL NUCLEAR PLAN FOR NATURAL URANIUM-FUELED HEAVY WATER MODERATED PLANTS BECAUSE OF THEIR LARGE NATURAL URANIUM RESOURCES. THE PLAN, COLL STATED, WAS FOR ARGENTINA TO BECOME COMPLETELY SELF-SUFFICIENT IN ATOMIC POWER IN THE FUTURE, IE NATURAL URANIUM RESOURCES, FABRICATION OF FUEL, AND PLANT CONSTRUCTION. HE DID NOT MENTION REPROCESSING. COLL REMARKED IN ADDITION HOWEVER ARGENTINA MUST CREATE THE NECESSARY ECONOMIC SITUATION TO ATTRACT MANY OF ITS TOP NUCLEAR SCIENTISTS BACK TO THE COUNTRY.

3. IN REGARD TO PROCEEDING WITH FUTURE FUEL CYCLES SUCH AS A BREEDER REACTOR PROGRAM, COLL STATED THAT ARGENTINA HAS TIME TO WAIT AND SEE WHAT DEVELOPS IN THIS AREA IN RELATION TO NEW TECHNOLOGIES FOR FUEL CYCLES. IN THIS REGARD COLL FEELS THAT THE US INITIATED INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE EVALUATION PROGRAM IS OF HIGH INTEREST TO ARGENTINA AND THEY WILL PARTICIPATE FULLY.

4. ON THE QUESTION OF ARGENTINAS RATIFICATION OF THE
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TLATELOLCO TREATY, COLL FELT CONFIDENT THAT ARGENTINA WOULD ARATIFY THE TREATY IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO RATIFICATION. HE DID NOT MENTION ANY CONDITIONS IN EXCHANGE FOR ARGENTINE RATIFICATION OF TLATELOLCO SUCH AS US HEAVY WATER TECHNOLOGY.

5. IN REGARD TO THE TRANSFER OF US ORIGIN HU FUEL TO PERU FOR THE ZERO ENERGY REACTOR, COLL INDICATED THAT THE GOA CONSIDERS THIS A LOAN FOR A YEAR OR YEAR AND A HALF AT WHICH TIME THE FUEL WOULD BE RETURNED TO ARGENTINA. COLL ALLOWED THAT CNEA HAD JUST RECEIVED FROM VIENNA THE TWO ADDITIONAL US OPTIONS FOR THE RESOLUTION OF THE RETRNASFER OF THE FUEL TO ARGENTINA (STATE 36554; VIENNA 1383). A MEETING OF CNEA AND FONOFF WAS TO TAKE PLACE YESTERDAY TO DISCUSS THE NEW OPTIONS. COLL FEELS THAT A RESOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM CAN BE WORKED OUT THIS WEEK, IN ANY CASE "IT MUST BE RESOLVED" BEFORE THE BOARD MEETING IN VIENNA NEXT WEEK. COLL IS LEAVING ARGENTINA SATURDAY FOR VIENNA AND STRONGLY WANTS A SETTLEMENT OF THE PREU FUEL TRANSFER ISSUE.

6. HE WAS HAPPY TO RECEIVE AMB SMITHS TELEGRAPHIC MESSAGE TO CASTRO MADERO (PRESENTLY TRAVELING IN CANADA) IN ANSWER TO HIS (CASTRO MADEROS) URGENT REQUEST FOR AMB SMITH TO INTERCEDE IN THE PERU FUEL TRANSFER ISSUE FOR ITS RESOLUTION. COLL SAID HE FELT AMB SMITH HAS A "POSITIVE ATTITUDE" IN US ARGENTINA NUCLEAR COOPERATION.

7. COMMENTS: SCIENCE COUNSELOR MET ON TUESDAY FEBRUARY 14, WITH PERUVIAN AMBASSADOR TO DELIVER TEXT OF JOINT US AND PERUVIAN NOTES ON US FUEL FOR ARGENTINE REACTOR LOAN TO PERU. THE AMBASSADOR SEEMED TO BE COMPLETELY CONFUSED AS TO WHERE THINGS STAND AT PRESENT SINCE HE ALSO RECEIVED COPY OF CASTRO MADEROS TELE
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GRAM TO AMB SMITH. WE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE ISSUES FOR ABOUT AN HOUR, TO REVIEW THE NOTES, AND REVIEW MUCH OF THE BACKGROUND INVOLVED.
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TAGS: PARM, MNUC, TECH, AR, US, CNEA, (COLL, JORGE ANTONIO)
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